

The Holy Spirit Wants to Fill You Again

On Feb. 17, 1967, exactly 50 years ago this month, a miracle happened near Pittsburgh that the world has largely ignored. It happened at a small Catholic retreat center called The Ark and the Dove, where a group of students from Duquesne University had gathered for a weekend of prayer. Suddenly, and without any warning, those students were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Patti Gallagher Mansfield, one of the first students to experience this outpouring of the Spirit, says she knew something remarkable and otherworldly had happened.

“Within the next hour, God sovereignly drew many of the students into the chapel,” she writes. “Some were laughing, others crying. Some prayed in tongues, others (like me) felt a burning sensation coursing through their hands.”

Gallagher had prayed a simple prayer prior to experiencing her personal Pentecost. She prayed, “Father, I give my life to you. Whatever you ask of me, I accept. And if it means suffering, I accept that too. Just teach me to follow Jesus and to love as He loves.”

The world was in turmoil in February 1967. Israel was on the verge of war with Palestinians. Racial tensions here in the United States were at a boiling point. Young protesters were demanding an end to the Vietnam War.

Few people noticed what happened to those students at Duquesne, but the fire that fell on them spread quickly to other campuses. Within a year, the Catholic Charismatic movement spread to millions—and it jumped the theological firewall to touch Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans and believers from all denominations.

It became the largest Christian movement since the Protestant reformation. Today, 70 percent of all Christians in Latin America are part of the Pentecostal movement. Similar growth has occurred in Africa and parts of Asia.

The wave of supernatural renewal that swept across the United States in 1967 continues today. The Holy Spirit has not withdrawn from us. He longs to fill us, refresh us and empower us in this new season. But if you want to experience your own Pentecost, you must surrender like Gallagher did. You must want more of God.

I believe Jesus wants to visit us in 2017 in a surprising way. It may not look exactly like the visitation of 50 years ago, but the Spirit is ready to fill us to the point of overflowing. Whether you have experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit already, or if you are new to this experience, open your heart and take these simple steps:

1. Prepare your heart. The Holy Spirit is holy. He is compared to a fire (Matt. 3:11), which means He purifies sin and burns up what is not Christlike in our lives. Make sure you have confessed all known sin and made your heart ready for His infilling. If you have grieved God because of habitual sin, repent and ask Him to set you free.

2. Ask Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Spirit. You do not need to jump through hoops to get God's attention. He is eager to answer your request. He said in John 7:38: "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." Jesus is the One who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, so ask Him—and expect him to answer. If you have been filled with the Spirit in the past but have backslidden, ask God to restore you. He is a God of second chances.

3. Receive the infilling. Begin to thank Him for your miracle. The Holy Spirit is filling your life. If you feel your mind is

clouded with doubts or fears, just praise the Lord. Focus your mind on Him and not yourself.

4. Release your supernatural prayer language. The moment you are filled with the Spirit, you will receive the ability to speak in a heavenly language. You may feel the words bubbling inside you, or you may actually hear the syllables in your mind. Open your mouth and begin to speak.

5. Step out in boldness. You have just jumped into river of God's anointing—and it is the gateway to all other miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy and healing. God wants to use you as a channel of His power to reach others for Christ. You will begin to notice a new boldness now that you are filled with the Spirit. God does not want you to hide your faith; He wants you to speak to others about Jesus. Expect Him to use you in surprising ways.

Jesus never wanted us to rely on our own abilities. He fills us with His Spirit so we will rely on Him alone. To be baptized in the Holy Spirit means to be totally immersed and saturated. The emptier you are of yourself, the more you can be filled with Him.

We live in a world that needs Jesus. We face terrorism, political polarization, injustice and the threat of war. What we need is another visitation from heaven. Let it start with you. Empty your life of sin, anxiety, selfishness and distraction and invite the Holy Spirit to set your heart on fire. {eoa}